

Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Resource Capacity Study

Adopted February 2011

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LOS Criteria

For water supply, the RMS defines levels of severity in relation to the time it would take for the resource to be used to its capacity, as follows:

LOS I	Level I is reached for a water resource when increasing water demand projected over nine years equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply.
LOS II	Level II for a water resource occurs when water demand projected over seven years (or other lead time determined by a resource capacity study) equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply.
LOS III	A Level of Severity III exists when water demand equals the available resource; the amount of consumption has reached the dependable supply of the resource.

According to the above table, a Level of Severity III (LOS III) can be established if a basin has reached its perennial yield *or dependable supply will be depleted before new supplies are developed* (emphasis added). The water forecasts in Attachments 5-12 indicate that perennial yield will be reached in the Paso Robles basin anywhere from 2010 to 2025. With the exception of unallocated Nacimiento Project water, no additional supplemental water supplies are on the horizon.

A Level of Severity I is recommended for the Atascadero Sub-basin. According to the sub-basin water balance scenario (Attachment 13), perennial yield will be reached in the years 2019-2021. This nine-year period corresponds to an LOS I.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A Level of Severity III is recommended for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin. Recommended actions are divided into monitoring and land use measures.

A. Paso Robles Groundwater Basin

Recommended Level of Severity: **III**

Recommended Monitoring Actions: (The following actions A1-6 also apply to the Atascadero Sub basin)

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1. The County should initiate the development of a groundwater monitoring program for approval by the Board of Supervisors and with elements that can be adopted by ordinance. The program should, at a minimum, address groundwater level and usage data collection. Effort to develop the program should include town-hall meetings to ensure stakeholder involvement. Issues to be addressed during the development of the program would include, but not be limited to, gaps in the existing monitoring network, voluntary versus non-voluntary participation, distinguishing how different users (urban, agricultural, rural) would be involved/affected/not affected, education and outreach, understanding what other amendments to County Code related to groundwater data collection are being developed, and the legal authorities of the County/District. The program should be consistent with the following:
 - a. California Statewide Groundwater Elevations Monitoring Program (CASGEM – Senate Bill X7 6)
 - b. District and stakeholder efforts on the Groundwater Management Plan now under preparation.
 - c. The Countywide Master Water Plan
 - d. Current monitoring programs of the Department of Public Works
2. Continue studies of the groundwater basin and stakeholder coordination efforts including the update and improvement of the numerical groundwater model and establishing a mechanism to fund these ongoing efforts (e.g. zone of benefit; groundwater district).
3. The County will develop and implement, in collaboration with other water purveyors within the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin and the Atascadero Sub-basin, a water conservation outreach and education program for the rural area. The outreach program will inform rural groundwater users of the state of the basin, include suggested conservation and efficiency measures, and if possible, provide incentives to water conservation and efficiency efforts.
4. The District will continue to conduct biannual groundwater measurements to chart the scope of groundwater level changes.
5. Title 8 of the County Code will be amended in accordance with the recommendations in the Resource Management System Annual Summary Report.

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6. The County will require that the new wells be a part of the District groundwater level measuring program if needed.

Recommended Land Use Actions: The following actions 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 do not apply to the Atascadero Sub basin.

7. In urban areas (defined as lands located within the County Land Use Element's Urban Reserve Lines) that do not have access to supplemental water (e.g. Nacimiento Project water), require new discretionary development that uses groundwater to use the California Urban Water Conservation Council's (CUWCC) best management practices for water conservation and offset 100 percent of its new water use with non-agricultural water.

No land use restrictions are imposed on development applications by this RCS in urban areas (defined as lands located within the County's Urban Reserve Lines) of the basin, including LAFCo Spheres of Influence for incorporated cities, if the following requirements are met:

- a. the project has access to supplemental water;
 - b. the development application is accompanied by a "will-serve" letter from a water purveyor that has access to supplemental water; and
 - c. the site of the proposed development will be annexed and developed within a city.
8. In unincorporated rural areas of the basin defined as lands located outside the County Land Use Element's Urban Reserve Lines:
 - a. Do not approve General Plan amendments that result in a net increase in the non-agricultural use of groundwater;
 - b. Prohibit new land divisions in the rural areas of the basin;
 - c. All discretionary development shall offset its water use with non-agricultural water, except that proposed Agricultural Processing uses (as defined in the Land Use Ordinance), including outdoor and other appurtenant water use, shall be subject to project-specific land use and/or water conservation mitigation measures required by the review authority based on environmental review.
9. New wineries shall use best management practices consistent with the BMP's identified in Attachment 14.
10. Revise the Growth Management Ordinance and the Resource Management System to substantially limit yearly non-agricultural development in the rural areas of the basin.